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Inflation slows in Alberta, Calgary's inflation the highest in Canada



Alesia Fieldberg & Mason DePatie || May 21, 2024

Despite inflation slowing in Alberta, the province's rent prices have increased by nearly twice the national average.

Statistics Canada released its April Consumer Price Index Report on Tuesday.

According to the report, the country's annual inflation rate slowed to a three-year low of 2.7 per cent in April, down slightly from 2.9 per cent in March.

In Alberta, the deceleration largely came from electricity and natural gas prices.

The cooling, however, was moderated by soaring rent prices.

"The last two years, rent has gone up," said Calgaryan Dustin Oxenbury.

"We were all-in \$1,300. Now, we're \$1,900, \$1,950."

Statistics Canada found rent prices in Alberta rose 16.2 per cent year over year in April, up from a 14.2 per cent increase in March.

This marks the eighth consecutive month Alberta has seen rent increases higher than the national level, which was 8.2 per cent in April.

This has some people calling for rent increases to be capped, or even temporarily frozen.

"We've got some people whose rent increases are over 100 per cent, so their rent's being doubled," said Maggy Wlodarczyk with ACORN's Calgary chapter.

"A lot of people are living on the streets. We have people who are pitching tents along the river."

Statistics Canada notes the increase coincides with strong demand from high net interprovincial migration to Alberta.

An Alberta economist says these are not like typical population booms linked to the energy sector.

"A lot of folks are coming from more expensive markets like B.C. and Ontario looking for cheaper housing," said Mark Parsons, ATB chief economist.

Migration data from the organization shows Alberta saw its population surge by 202,324 residents to 4.8 million in 2023.

Economists do expect interest rate cuts to start this summer but say it will likely drop slowly.

"We expect to continue pressure on housing and rent, because of the population boom. We continue to see people come here from the rest of the country," Parsons said.

Calgary's inflation the highest in Canada

Despite seeing a substantial drop in April, Calgary's inflation was the highest in Canada last month.

According to Statistics Canada, Calgary's inflation was 3.6 per cent in April, down from 4.2 per cent in March.

It was followed by Halifax, sitting at 3.4 per cent, then Toronto at 3.2 per cent.

In Edmonton, inflation sat at 2.8 per cent in April, down from 3.3 per cent the month prior.